NADINE

AND OTHER POEMS

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NADINE

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

ANNE REEVE ALDRICH

Author of "The Rose of Flame" and "Songs about Life, Love, and Death"

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NOTE.

DESIRING to preserve the work of my beloved daughter, I have gathered in this little volume all of her unpublished poems, irrespective of merit or felicitous relation.

Some of them were written in her childhood; others during the last year of her earthly life.

It has pleased me to include in the book the memorials of Miss Aldrich by Bishop T. U. Dudley and Edith Thomas, and also a few of many sonnets addressed to her.

HELEN M. REEVE ALDRICH.

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NADINE AND OTHER POEMS.

NADINE.

Person.—NADINE, *once a well-known woman of Paris, now a recluse.*

Place.—Her bedchamber, opening into a small oratory in an old country house in Brittany.

Time.—The present day.

MORNING again; and will this morning bring
No letter? Six long months of awful snow,
Six months of morning waking to the hope—
The hope—let that word choke there in my throat!
(No lies, Nadine, for you are done with lies)—
And yet he does not love her. Like those days
When he was gone, and not a word, not one
Until the letter from—his wife,—that said:
"*Laurence is dying, and he calls your name;*
His wife prays you will come.—Hélène de Roche."
O Saint Hélène! To think one earth should hold
Such women-martyrs and such beasts as I!
No slurs for me, but all
Sweet ceremony, as for honored guest.

How she lived on through those black, awful nights,—
The lamplight shaded from the great white bed
On which he tossed, between our chairs drawn close,
His wife, his lover, one on either side,—
God only knows, from whom she drew her strength.
She sat there still, and heard him cry and rave
Through fevered hours about our shameful love:
"Closer, Nadine; your lips again, Nadine.
No, dearest, keep your head here on my neck."
Paris burns out our blushes in a week.
I had no way of looking what I felt,
Because I had forgotten, long ago,
What shame was, and its mien. She only cried,
With tortured eyes, *"Speak, to him, madame, speak.*
Your voice may move him; try it, for God's sake."
How could I call him by the little name
I made for him in those old hours of love,
With her there? Thrust her once more in the heart?
Something woke in me that I thought was dead.
I swore there in the solemn, sinking night
That he should live, and live for her. He lived.
I stayed on till a day when I might speak
With safety to a man whose hold on life
Grew stronger with each hour.

"Laurence, all days
Of love are past, with me, as innocence.
I go to pray and work in some far solitude
Until I die. No words can move me—none.
I brought you back your life. Give me that life,

That I, in turn, may give it to your wife,
Whose name my lips are far too vile to speak.
Still, if a beggar brought one back a gem
One would not therefore throw the gem away,
And she will take it from my blackened hands.
You must live on without me, for I swear
My days of love are done forevermore.
I turn to God; perhaps He may forgive.
Turn you to her; perhaps she may forgive.
Oh, think of this: a tender, snow-white dove
You took, and should have hid her in your heart.
Instead, you drove sharp arrows toward her heart,
Tore at her plumage, gave her every pain
A torturer might conceive,—in loving me.
Oh, for the sake of manhood, turn to her;
Atone, repent: you will not fail to love
At last. You men seem made so that
We devils gain you when God gives you saints
To bless your firesides! O Laurence, I pray,
Atone, repent, and you will love at last;
For she is fair, and you will love at last."
His mighty form was wasted to the bone;
His eyes in hollow sockets turned on me
And searched me as I spoke. O dreadful hour
At whose sad close I won the victory,
Though on his pillows he lay back as dead!
And now the promise, if he ever loved
The saint God gave him, he should write me word,
That I might then rejoice and hold it sign

That God forgave the ruin I had wrought.
I did not pause for one brief farewell look
At that dear face—the mouth grown pallid now
Whose kisses had burned mine,—nor at the throat,
Whose sinews were like cords these later days
Beneath the waxen skin where oft my cheek
Had tenderly been laid. Saved as by fire!
I only stopped to speak one parting word
To her. *"Madame, I sin no more; farewell!*
In those old days I fancied that I sinned
Against a mortal. Even such as I
Draw back in awe before a saint of God.
Forget—oh, in your happiness, forget"—
The words seemed strangled in my throat; but she—
O marvel—bent and kissed me on the mouth—
The mouth that he had kissed and for whose touch
He had betrayed her. If she knew the seal
She thus set on me! Why, that kiss of hers
Should stay the last there (as it was the first
Pure kiss that I remember), though I spilled
My blood in unguessed tortures to defend
My lips from other touch!
Six months ago!
Six months, and yet no letter from his hand!
And it is almost time for Jean to push
His way through muffled roads, the post-bag thrown
Across one clumsy shoulder.
Ah, God knows,
We rise to wondrous momentary heights

And chant the pæan of farewell in tones
That falter not,—but oh, the after-time!—
The after-time with tempting memory!
When I pray
Beyond there, at the cross, I still can hear
Our laughter dying to the mutual hush
Of deep content, and, kneeling, I can feel
His loving arms around me as of old.
I cry out, "*I repent! O God, forgive!*
Forgive, and turn his passion all to her."
Yet hear him at my ear whisper, "*Nadine,*
I love thee. O thy lips once more, Nadine!"
I fix my eyes upon the dying Christ,
And by His sacred wounds I make appeal
For her, the pure,—for her great happiness.
And, by the Agony, I call on God
To send forgetfulness of me to him.
And while I pray I see that room—its lights,
Its rapture, and its rest—with guilty eyes.
But once he writes, I think it all will pass,
And I shall spend my life in thanking God.
A letter? Yes, I—bring the letter, quick!
You are so slow—my eyes—I cannot see
The postmark—ah—go now, and somewhat later
The pain will cease, and I will read it. Go!
At last! The end is here, and I am strong.

"*Farewell, Nadine; you never loved as I,*
Or else you had not gone; and so I know

Your pain passed with the day, which makes me glad.
My happiness were marred if I believed
You suffered still. We all hear of your life,—
Its gentle deeds, its goodness to the poor.
I know that in it you have merged a past
In which I had some part."

Some part! O God, "in which I had some part"!

"Farewell, poor girl, and may you find all peace,
For what you wished, Nadine, has come to pass.
I love her, and your prophecy was true.
I write you, as I pledged my word to write,—
Farewell, Nadine, and let us both forget."
Here is the end.
What was it in this case I had to do?
Ah, yes, beyond there at the altar steps
I must kneel down and offer thanks to God.

(*She passes into the oratory.*)

I am not strong enough to praise Thee yet,
O Thou Most High, for this Thy grace to me.
Thou knowest that the brain works slow and dull
At times like this; yet I must thank Thee, God.
I vowed to thank Thee ever if this thing
Thou brought to pass, and lo, the time is come,
And I am here, according to my vow,
To offer thanks. Oh, if it were a man
Had granted my request, how could I ask

For one thing more? But Thou, Thou art a God
Whose riches are not spent with one great gift,
Have pity once again upon this heart,
Blackened, but broken, formed, O God, by Thee,
And soiled by man! Have pity once again
Upon Thy work! Let me go mad, or die!

THE PLAINT OF ABEILLARD.

Ne m'écrivez plus, Héloïse, ne m'écrivez plus !—*Lettre d'Abeillard.*

WRITE me no more; the time has come for ashes
Upon the heads of sinners such as we.
How can I read thy words and think on heaven
As other than the heaven given by thee?
I see thy fingers moving on the parchment;
Then feel their cushioned tips upon my face.
I hold them, draw thee closer to me by them,
Until I have thee in the old embrace.
Write me no more!

Write me no more; for I am still a sinner.
Thy letters burn me, laid upon my heart
For safer keeping. Yestreen at the altar
I felt them there, and gave a guilty start.
Melted away the solemn, awful Presence,
And in the incense-smoke I saw thy form
Evoked—O God!—in all its curves and whiteness.

Some lurking devil must have worked the charm.
Write me no more!

Write me no more; thou knowest, fellow-sinner,
No more on earth can be the old embrace,
Until our bodies, frozen into stillness,
Rest side by side within the grave's cold space.
Yet dead, at that sweet touch shall we not tremble,
And something of the old dear rapture know?
Ah, see the sinful longings thou hast wakened!
Help me forget thee, else thou art my foe.
Write me no more!

A SONG FROM THE EAST.

O Western Land, O glorious sunset Land!
  My feet have never trod thy wondrous ways,
Mine eyes have never rested on thy plains,
  Or mountains clad in purple haze.

And yet I feel, beyond the power of speech,
  An alien from my spirit's proper home.
A thankless daughter of the fostering East,
  I turn from her, with sick desire to roam

Until I find the land for which I yearn,
  As homesick child might pine for mother's breast,
The East must keep my body—but my soul
  Longs for the broader regions of the West!

A BALLAD OF SLUMBER.

The first sleep that my love slept
He had upon the grass,
Stretched low beneath my casement-pane
Until the night should pass.
I leaned forth and looked down on him
At mid-watch of the night,—
Upon his hair, all drenched with dew,
A waning moon shone white.

The second sleep my love slept
His head was on my breast.
I grieved the hour must pass, so fain
Was I to watch his rest.
I bent and kissed his listless lips
Curled, redly, half apart.
So heavy lies thy head, my love,
'Tis like to crush my heart.

The last sleep that my love slept
  Shall last till Judgment Day,
In corner of the lichyard close,
  'Neath drooping boughs of May.
Another sleeps upon my breast
  My dead love does not care ;
He could not feel my kisses now,
  Nor dew that drenched his hair.

THE VOICE IN THE GARDEN.

Didst thou not hear?—Nay, but I heard
  The hot breeze stir the heliotrope,
Play with the tresses of these trees,
  Then hurry down the mountain's slope.

Didst thou not see?—Nay, but I saw
  The eyes that mirror back my face
Gaze at me with a strange new look,
  Across some fancied gulf of space.

Didst thou not feel?—Nay, but I felt
  Thy warm face hiding in my neck,
Thy arms grip like a drowning man's,
  Who clasps some spar from out the wreck.

He neither heard, nor felt, nor saw!
  On me the curse, to me the Voice,
For me the burden of the guilt
  Who tempted him and left no choice.

Alas! for me, a later Eve,
A heavier curse lies on my heart;
For her's was exile, but with him,
While mine is exile—but apart!

A PLEA FOR THE PRESENT.

Done are Hellenic days ; the goddesses all have departed,
Gone is the nymph from the wood, and Pan is a long time dead.
Come, celebrate our age; it is good as any other.
No more harking backward, our century sing instead.

Dwarfed bodies? Malformations? Hideous shapes and colors ?
All of your age, my poet, its story must be told;
Leave Castaly and Olympus, and write for us its poems.
Where's your alembic fancy to turn base things to gold ?

Lest they write us down in future a "curious, unsung cycle,

Which had its poets, truly, a puling and morbid race,
Who made no songs of their times, but travelled back through the ages
To lament on a Grecian lyre, a dead religion's grace!"

THE ENVOY AT THE INN.

Only a little foot, save for a slipper, bare;
A heelless, turquoise-colored Persian shoe
Poised on the toe-tip, and the warm white flesh
Cut slantwise at the ankle, where the blue
Veins seemed to deepen in their blue, by lace
In foamy frills. This, in that dark, dull place

Just given me by briefly opened door,
As I went stumbling through the passage-way.
The whinnying horses pawed the earth outside.
On the king's business, who dare make delay?
But oh, the rosy cushion of that heel,
And oh, upon my neck the touch to feel

Of that small queenly foot's most tender palm!
Postilions shouted, and the courtyard there
Was full of bustle, and I took my seat
To dream through jolting hours. The little bare

Pink foot was treading on my longing heart.
No doubt that Fate gave me a happy part

When she decreed no throbbing pause for me ;
For disillusion waits on such a stay.
Yet--women that I fain would later love,
One powerful little foot spurns them away.
For here's what maddens all us men, you see,
An Unattained, a touch of mystery !

SONG OF THE EPICUREAN.

Ah, how soon our day is over!
Warm as sun and sweet as clover.
When it fades down to the West
All must go—the worst and best.
Burning breast that pants with passion,
You must follow this world's fashion.
Worms shall kiss the throat I kiss,
Feed where my lips fed with bliss.
Earth stands still, but Time's a rover.
Ah, how soon our day is over!

Ah, how soon our day is over!
Here's short space for love and lover;
Let us love, then, while we may,
Crowd with joy our little day.
Who can say what night shall bring?
While we may, we'll kiss and sing.
Death shall soon cut our embraces,
Chill our love and blench our faces.
Earth our bodies fair shall cover.
Ah, how soon our day is over!

A SLUMBER SONG.

Hush, and lie still on my bosom; 'tis past thy time of rest,
And the fields are dim in the twilight, each shivering bird in its nest;
'Tis the hour when soft, innocent things like thee are folded warm in sleep,
'Tis the hour when their silent watchers may sit in the darkness and weep.
Wilt thou forgive us, my darling, for bringing thee here to the world,
A soul that must struggle for heaven lest downward to hell it be hurled?
Ah, when love touches thee, darling, thou piece of thy mother, thou'lt say:
Grief may be Lord of to-morrow, but I am Love's hand-maid to-day!
Sleep!

Hear thou thy lot, my small woman, the lot of thy mother's child:

A few short years in the meadows, to play by the waters mild;
An unknown impulse that sways thee, and leads thy maiden feet
To travel the little pathway that leads to thy kingdom, Sweet.
At the gate to a woman's kingdom—thy mother tells thee this—
One stands to await thy coming, and to greet thee with a kiss;
And thy reign shall last, it may be, throughout a night and a day;
And then, a queen no longer, thou shalt walk a slave alway.
Sleep!

Nay, do not start so, my darling; my heart 'neath thy dreaming head
Leaps at the old brief triumph till it makes thee a restless bed.
Poor little child of my sex, thou shalt have this comfort to know
A reign of one day of love is well worth a serfdom of woe.
Thou of my flesh, I aver it,—I would not withhold thee one grain
Of thy dower of love and anguish, thy birthright of passion and pain.

'Tis so dark, I no longer can see thee, but I feel thee
warm in thy rest,
And I hold thee, thou Sphinx's Riddle, in the shelter of
my breast.
Sleep!

THE INVITATION.

"Now, dear my Soul," said the Body,
"Why not go to the feast with me?
My senses are pleased, but the zest is half lost
If thou share not the glee.
Dost thou not love me, comrade,
That still thou bidest away,
And I go so oft to the feast alone
While thou in the gloom wilt stay?"

"Alas!" said the Soul to the Body,
"I long, pleasure-mate, for the glee.
'Tis because I might learn to love thee too well
I must bide from feasts with thee.
Lest in that cold hour of parting,
When thou art still, and I fleet,
I should wish, instead of heaven, for thee,
Wrapped in thy winding-sheet."

A DYING SINNER.

Only time for one backward glance
  Before I pass out of it all.
Strange to wither away from this dark old world
  And to drop like a leaf in the fall!

Passion and love all past—
  Black like a fire-shrivelled scroll
Greedily snatched at and tightly held,—
  Was it the price of my soul?

What can a woman do
  Who sees it and understands?
Is it too late to grope toward the Light,
  And stretch longing, sin-stained hands?

AN IMPULSE.

The silent little glen I often seek,
Moist, dark ; a tiny rivulet runs through
The lush wet grass—so small a silvery thread,
That one might take it for a line of dew;
The trees have shut it in, a sylvan room,
Full of chill earthy scents. Diana might
Choose such a spot to don her huntress garb,
Or stretch her cold, chaste body there at night.
And yet to-day, thou thing of Eastern suns,
The very contrast of the place to thee
Made me look up and through the undergrowth
With the wild dream that thou hadst come to me!

WEEPING.

Tears comfort well in grief of hopeless love
The longing for some star from overhead.
Tears to our God, for bitter shame of sin,
Can wash the stain fleece-white from crimson red.
Tears for the dead ease the sad heart of strain,
Till hope looks up toward heaven and smiles again.

But there are tears that sear the soul and eyes
Past shedding more, and burn like molten lead ;
Wept when some craven, that the heart has served,
Wallows in dust and soils his love-crowned head.

A FAREWELL.

WHAT is the thing I most regret
  Since now our love is over,
And I have ceased adoring you
  And you're no more the lover?

I most regret the hours apart
  We might have spent together!
I grudge the happiness we lost
  Before this change of weather!

Why were we not more happy then,
  Those fleeting days improving?
Because we dreamed when age crept on
  It still would find us loving!

The Present seemed so sure to last
  We never thought to prize her.
Ah, well, I think next time we love,
  My dear, we'll each be wiser!

BURNING THE LETTERS.

Dear perjuries I loved so well,
  Dear dead believing,
In these sweet written lies of his,
  This fair deceiving,—

Blistered with hot and happy tears,
  Worn by my kisses,
Hid warmly on my breast at night,
  What an end this is!

Dear yellowed leaves, dear faded words,—
  The red flame flashes—
No elegy I speak but this:
    Ashes to ashes!

A SONG OF JUNE.

This is the end of all, my dear,
  This is the end of all.
Love is a blossom of the spring,
  And each spring bloom must fall.

Some fall before their time, my dear,
  And others tightly cling
Until the warm breeze drifts them down
  At very close of spring.

Now that life's June is come, my dear,
  Our love must fade and pass
Like other springtide blooms that die
  Forgotten in the grass.

CONTRASTS.

Is it a star in yonder darkling pool
Fallen from heaven to glow in blackest night?
'Tis but a lily, born amidst the slime,
Yet sweet as incense, shining pure as fire.

Is it an angel in this world of sin
Sent to bring joy and peace from heaven above?
'Tis but a woman, sprung from common earth,
With snow-pure soul and tender heart of love.

AN UNFINISHED FRAGMENT.

Love walked out of my heart one day,
  Leaving an empty room.
One cannot close up the heart that way
  Like a tomb.

But now ambitions and works and cares
  Are filling the silent room ;
Yet for all furnishings it fares
  So like a tomb !

TOO LATE.

There was a day I prayed with panting soul
  That I might yet rejoice in glowing fame,
So that his heart might think on me with pride,
  His lips be very proud to speak my name;
And fame, that seemed so far, at last is here,
But he—has lain in kirkyard many a year.

ARCADY.

'Tis but a pot of primrose
  Set on a city sill;
'Tis but a laughing maiden
  Whose lips I kiss at will;
Yet here's enough for Love and me
To make a heavenly Arcady.

I ask no verdant pastures,
  No shepherd with his fold,
No winding silver streamlet,—
  The Poet's fancy bold
Needs only flowers and maid, you see,
To turn a room to Arcady.

MRS. HITCHCOCK'S PARLOR.

No, I ain't got a parlor now, since Mimy come f'm
school.
She's tore the best room all to bits thet I laid out by rule.
It a'most broke my heart at first. I stood 'n said my say;
But—well, you know what mothers is,—I let her have
her way.

When John 'n' me first moved out here, folks rode for
twenty mile
To see thet parlor's settin' out,—'twas thought such
handsome style;
A fine thick carpet on the floor—your feet sunk in like
moss;
Its pattern, flowers in green and blue, each flower two
feet across.

We had no pictures placed around to spoil the nice
white wall;

Our weddin'-lines was framed in black 'n' hung 'n' thet was all,
Except a wreath Aunt Jane gave John made of the family hair—
The flowers was mostly sandy, for the Hitchcocks all was fair.

The furniture was hair-cloth of the best 'n' blackest dye;
An' on the rosewood marble-top the Bible used to lie.
I had a tidy for each chair, of varyin' design.
I've watched folks stare a-comin' in, the whole 'fect was so fine.

I always kep' the shades pulled down. No matter if the air
Was broilin' hot in August, it was nice and chilly there.
'N' Mimy called it close 'n' damp, but as for *my* taste—well,
I think a parlor *ought* to have that varnish-hair-cloth smell!

'Twas jes' the place for funerils; had a sort o' pleasin' gloom;
It seemed, as parson once remarked, a gateway to the tomb.
An' as fer weddin's—well, I guess the highest minded pair
Would think how weighty was their vows when bein' married there!

I don't say much, but f'm my heart it often makes me sigh
To wonder where *my* funeril 'l be, when my time comes to die.
That cheerful room that Mimy's fixed with bric-y-brac 'n' flowers
Ain't no fit place for folks to meet in sad 'n' solemn hours.

Yes, yes. Its true I shan't know when that time comes to me,
But now I can't but make it seem—sech poor weak souls we be—
But what I'll know 'n' feel disgraced to pass down to the tomb
F'm Mimy's triflin' parlor, 'stead o' my dark, staid best-room!

A BIT OF FEMININITY.

They always said he liked her first,
That I was but an "*arrière-pensée;*"
Which made me prudently defer
The breaking with my late *fiancé.*

He bored me, but one teasing thought
Still made me feel I might regret him;
For, although tired of him myself,
I did not want that girl to get him!

Piqued by our vaunted happiness,
His Phillida became enraged;
And to my great surprise and joy
'Twas told, one day, she was engaged.

And now her wedding-day's announced,
With heart serene and full of glee
I've sent my startled lover off;
And I once more, thank Heaven, am free!

She always was a little prude,
  Severely bound to Mrs. Grundy;
And now, whatever she may feel,
  She'll surely be a bride on Monday.

Oh, no, I'm not a heartless girl ;
  I'm just clear woman, through and through.
The feeling that you reprehend
  Experience may teach to you.

I'm perfectly contented now;
  No day will come when I'll regret him.
I liked him—not enough for life,
  But just too well for her to get him !

REJECTED.

When you've penned a tender sonnet or rhymed a rankling sorrow,
And sent it, fondly hopeful, to a "leading magazine"
(One of those that give their writers a generous compensation;
You know, poor patient scribbler, just the monthlies that I mean,
No amount of past experience will help to make you cheerful,
No pleasant if ambiguous term of editorial phrase,
When your brain's beloved bantling returns to you more surely
Than bread cast on the waters, after weary, waiting days.

But when the merry quip that seemed to you so funny
That you could not keep from smiling when you posted it that day

Is sent back to your address with most courteous, chilling promptness,
Its humor does not strike you in that same delicious way.
It has somehow lost its flavor and you feel a deadly nausea,
So strangely dull and witless look your playful fancy's pranks.
Oh, 'tis hard to have poetic grief or tenderness rejected;
But there's nothing quite so sickening as a jest "returned with thanks."

LIFE AS REGULATED BY THE MERCURY.

Go, Mary, get my seal-skin coat, my respirator, too,
Likewise my woollen underwear, and warm them through and through.
It is the middle of July, and cold and clear the day,
And I am in a hurry for my shopping on Broadway.
Lay out my large umbrella, I shall need it if it snows ;
And get my purse down from the shelf; I can but heed the woes
Of New York's poor, who suffer on just such days as these—
No money to buy wood or coal,—how can we let them freeze?
And pack my hand-bag with the things I wore in broiling June.
I must be gone the whole day long; it might grow warm by noon!
Put in my fan, my black mull gown, my lightest Oxford ties,—

It may be ninety-eight by twelve, and forethought is
but wise.
Then in some ladies' toilet-room I'll change from head
to feet,
And in a trice walk out attired a "Summer Girl" com-
plete.
Don't give the orders until noon—for dessert. Some-
thing nice.
If it's sixty, have plum-pudding—if one hundred, lemon
ice.

TO THE "SOCIAL CLUB" ON ITS ONE-HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY.

Dear friends, I'm very glad to send you greeting
On this the "Social Club's" one hundredth meeting!
And although cursed with a reluctant Muse
On this occasion, no one could refuse
To rhyme good wishes, since 'tis in one way
The venerable Club's Centennial day!
And oh! how old it makes me feel to say
That I remember well its first birthday,
Although it makes me quite proud to declare
That on that great occasion I was there.
How tenderly the little Club was nursed
They alone know who waited on it first.
But I aver,—and those who will may mock,—
There never was a time it couldn't *talk!*
But oh, that little Club, how fast she grew!
Her members here to-night will prove it true.
No rapid growth in Nature could outdo her;

Why, Jonah's famous gourd was nothing to her!
Until at last, as girls do at a ball,
She made her début in this self-same Hall;
And now she's in her prime—an honored dame,
Hospitable, and not unknown to fame.
Her talents and attainments far and wide
Have spread throughout our pleasant country-side.
Perhaps this seems a partial chronicle:
The Club's best loved by those who know it well.
They also say it's true,—I shouldn't wonder,—
That "absence makes the heart grow fonder";
And if I've sung its praises overloud,
I own I think we've reason to be proud.

The Club has kept her journal—all girls do—
And many a jolly time's recorded, too:
She's picnicked, danced, and flirted like the rest,
And—quarrelled? Sometimes, it must be confessed;
But blissful peace succeeded every strife,
And, sure, variety's the spice of life.
And if our memories should backward stray
They'll gaze upon this Club in strange array:
Countesses, negroes, French and Dutch,
Knaves, rogues, and robbers, and all such;
The pleading wife, the villain cold,
The maiden shy, the lover bold;
Here a fine dame with silken train,
And there a timid, bashful swain;

Pert waiting-maids and gossips gray
Have come and gone and said their say,
Have wept, or got into an awful rage,
Made love or murdered—all upon the stage,—
At least all *murders* were committed there ;
As to the *courtships*, why, I wouldn't swear,
Since half a dozen weddings, should I try,
Past and approaching, might give me the lie.

Across the rumbling of the city street
I almost think I hear the dancing feet,
The songs and music, and the laughter gay
That shows the Club keeps well its holiday.
And many a hundredth birthday may it see,
And keep each one with mirth and jollity !
Then, too, I hope that each succeeding year
Shall make it to its members grow more dear.
And as, alas ! all must grow old and gray,
Those here, no doubt, will at some future day
Tell to the listening grandchild at the knee,
When winter fires are burning cheerfully,
The story that it loves the best to hear,
Beginning, " Well, once at the Club, my dear."

But all too far my fancy takes its flight ;
I must come back to prose and say—good-night !

THREE WORDS.

I.

It was just one little word,
But 'twas very plainly heard,
And it filled my heart with deepest pain and woe;
And as you'll surely guess,
I may as well confess—
The little word she proudly said was "No."

II.

Though my brain was in a whirl,
For I idolized the girl,
I coolly turned away and said "Good-by";
And I paused for nothing more;
But, as I reached the door,
I heard a soft, pathetic little sigh!

III.

I saw a golden head
And two quivering lips of red
That trembled with the words they longed to say;
And as you'll surely guess,
She may as well confess—
That, muffled on my shoulder, they said "Stay."

FOOLS.

Oh, he was poor and she was poor,
And yet they were happy, the wooed and the wooer.
"For gold," he whispered, "I do not care,
Save for that in the sunny wealth of your hair."
"And I," she said, "shall not miss the shine
Of jewels, when your eyes look in mine."
But the cold world has made its iron rules,
It sneered at the lovers, and whispered "Fools!"

And they,—they heeded, like many a pair,
And drifted apart in life's springtime there.
In later years he took him a bride
Who brought him gold—but, ah! what beside?
And she shuddered, her jewel-decked youthful charms
Clasped in a rich old dotard's arms,
While the world approves, for they followed its rules,
But their own hearts mock them and whisper "Fools!"

GRANDMOTHER.

See her sitting in the sun,
Folded hands, her work all done;
'Tis life's peaceful eventide.
Held by household band most dear,
All who know her gather near,
Learning wisdom at her side.

You who dread advancing years,
Learn of her and calm your fears.
See how sweet old age may be!
Children's children round her play
Like the rosy blooms of May
Clustering on some hoary tree.

She has nobly done her part;
Now in many a sorrowing heart
Pours she balm of peace and love.
Every night we humbly pray,
Lengthen still her life's long day,
Spare her to us from above.

ADIEU.

AUGUST's done, and summer's over,
Here's farewell to summer's lover!
Here's farewell, fair cavalier!
Summer's done, and autumn's here.
Let this sad elegiac ode
End our summer's episode.
It was just the joy of June
Set our hearts to beat in tune.
Tender word and tender glance,
Foolish vows,—a brief romance!
Summer vows are made to break;
Cease those sulks, for conscience' sake.
Just to stroll the fields together,
Summer made the sunny weather;
Now cold clouds are in the sky,
Flowers and grass begin to die,
Happy birds no longer sing;
We, like them, are taking wing.
Seek not, then, to longer bind

Love as light as summer wind ;
Let us part without regret,
Each with freedom to forget.
Blame *me* not for July moonlights
And the charm of August moonlights.
Frankly, I may scarce remember
What your name was, by December.
You are free to do the same,
To forget my very name.
In a twelvemonth you'll be saying,
If your memory's backward straying,
"Jove, what *was* her name, I wonder!
Glad we didn't make the blunder
Of imagining love would tarry ;
Thanks to Heaven, we didn't marry!"
I may smile in retrospection
At the tender recollection
How we said good-by forever
In the moonlight by the river.
Set this maxim on your list,
Kisses should not be rekissed;
'Twas not love, 'twas but flirtation
Meant to while away vacation.
Don't deceive yourself, my lover,
Fondest dreams are soonest over.
For a month you may regret me,
But in two you will forget me.
Here's farewell ! Our life-paths sever.
It must be farewell forever.

A STORY OF THE MARGUERITE.

Poor little daisy ! there you lie—
  Torn petals, mixed heart of gold,—
My cruel hand has left you thus,
  Trying that charm I learned of old.
I murmured oft the mystic words
  Seeking my fate, with girlish fancies,
And the story that the daisy tells
  Is the tale of my romances :

" Il m'aime—un peu—beaucoup—
Passionnément—pas du tout."

" He loves." Ah ! yes, he surely did ;
  And I was eight and he was ten.
He brought me apples, swung me high,
  And served more patiently than men.
I wished, small gourmand, for the nuts
  Then ripe in woods four miles away :
He left his games, trudged there and back
  Foot-sore and tired at twilight gray.

"A *little.*" Handsome Paul Dunois,
He loved a little, *I* loved dearly.
He loved me quite as well as May,
As *well as Alice,*—very nearly.
He loved full twenty at a time,
That hero of my first sweet dreaming.
I loved him for his eyes and curls,
For sixteen loves the outward seeming.

"*Much!*" Was it much? I often wonder
Just how much that grave tutor loved me—
My foolish head, its lack of knowledge.
He *sometimes* frowned, though he approved me,
So learned in dead languages,
So lean, and forty if a day,
He soon spoke love instead of Latin,
In spite of all that I could say.

And "*Passionately.*" Well, I know he loved thus
Who sought his death that night in Burnham wood;
Who said—and, woe is me! I laughed his saying—
That life without me held no further good.

I never loved him, but at hush of midnight
Those dead eyes haunt me till the break of morn.
"Scorn me not now," most pleadingly they beg me,
"For I have passed beyond the reach of scorn."

And "*Not at all.*" Oh, bitter Fate's derision!
I who was so adored, so loved in vain,
I with hearts set beneath my feet for spurning,
I love at last and am not loved again!

O daisy! I alone can read your story,
Broken and crushed, your poor leaves torn apart;
So wither now my hopes, like your poor petals,
Torn ruthlessly from out a ruined heart.

HIS REPLY.

WHAT'S a letter? Do you think I want a bit of paper
  Scrawled with love-words? just a perfumed piece of white?
Then—how learned you so to madden me with phrases,
  Me, all these accursèd miles away to-night!

You inquisitor! You lovely, wicked Arch Tormentor!
  Oh, you know too well this moment how I stand,
Tortured by the baffling space that keeps me from you,
  With your letter crushed and ruined in my hand!

Words? I tell you not to write me letters; I command you.
  Is it not enough to want you so in vain,
But you send me what evokes you here before me—
  This paper, all along whose lines your hand has lain?

Why, your portraits, all the things you touched, I keep
in darkness;
Then you send this fresh from you three days ago!
Oh, you women! Is it that you love such anguish,
Or is it that perhaps you do not know?

Now you—I wonder if these lines will seem to haunt
you
Till you long to lay your cheek in its old place,
Next my throat, where you can feel the pulses throb-
bing
Against the flower-like softness of your face?

Yes or no, I will have no more letters from you,
And from this time I forget and put you by,
Till that hour when next my arms enfold you,
And I hear your first long, trembling, rapturous sigh!

A RESURRECTION OF LOVE.

I AM not cheated, and this is love—
  Love as I knew it that other day.
I am an alien now no more,
  I am a subject under Love's sway.
Old love-words come back to my lips,
  Dear as the sound of one's mother-tongue :
To some, at least, in this weary world
  A song is as sweet if 'tis well resung.

Why should he learn of that other time?
  The past is mine and mine alone ;
Enough for him that he finds with joy
  I have turned in his arms to flesh from stone.
And perhaps it might dash his brimming cup
  With a savor of jealousy and pain,
If he guessed I am glad because I know
  He has taught me that I can love—again !

A DELAY.

Revenge came just an hour too late!
  Poor victim, had she been but stronger,
  Could she have stayed a little longer—
But Death called, and she could not wait.

Revenge came just an hour too late!
  She might have seen the cup containing
  The bitter dregs mixed for his draining—
But Death called, and she could not wait.

CHRISTMAS IN THE FISHING VILLAGE.

THERE'S Marjory yearns for her absent lad
Far away on the winter sea ;
"And alas," she cries, "for a Christmastide
Belovéd, without thee!"

There's Joan who sits and grieves apart,
With weary, tearless eyes ;
For the years stretch long with her on earth
And her lover in Paradise.

THE CHOICE.

A SHIP is moored below here in the bay;
To-morrow, fading in the distance gray,
It will pass on and outward on its way
Beyond the sight of yearning, straining eyes.

To-morrow I shall stand here all alone,
Aged in youth, my songs and laughter done,
Caring no more for darkness or for sun,
Too cold for tears, too weak for any cries.

How should I grieve? I knew the sun that rose
Could only stay with me till one day's close;
I knew the end, foresaw it; ere I chose
I knew I bought the sweetness with this pain.

MOTHER AND CHILD.

I WALKED by hills and by the lonely sea,
My soul was comfortless and sore distraught,
For I had sought for love from fellow-men:
It was denied. Nature, who never gives
A stone for bread, coldness for sympathy—
Dear Mother Nature spoke unto my soul.
And, as I sat upon a rocky cliff
Which overhung the restless, creeping waves,
I heard her voice, and thus she spoke to me:

"I am man's wisest teacher. God has planned me
To be a guide for them; they may command me
Who know my strength and best can understand me.
"If one have toiled and learns at last with pain
That in his riches lies his only gain,
Let him draw close to me in years that yet remain.

"If one have loved and love be unreturned,
Let her not mourn, though still her love be spurned:
She shall find deeper bliss than that for which she yearned.
"He who knows God, and so may see
The revelation of all mystery
In my deep bosom, where all hid things be.

"Ye are like little children, not more wise
Than babes who silver cast aside if tinsel please the eyes;
So grasping lesser joys, God's great gifts ye despise."
So spake the woods and more unto my soul,
And I arose and went home comforted.

A VIOLET.

As yesterday I held a book
I had not seen since years before,
It kept the old familiar look
It had in days of yore.
I turned the time-stained pages o'er,
And tears fell on forgotten lays,
And something fluttered to the floor,
Another relic of old days—
I saw it with a dim regret—
A violet.

Ah me ! in happiness long past
Another violet bloomed for me.
Death, who so many blossoms hast,
Oh, were they not enough for thee ?
Dear as this laid between the leaves,
From fading influence apart,
So thou, though dead, art still enshrined
Within the chambers of my heart,
And thy soul's fragrance lingers yet,
Dead violet.

A GOLDEN SUNSET.

O golden chain of golden years, who fitly shall besing thee ?
Made up of half a hundred links, yet welded into one !
Made up of half a hundred years, whose seasons, swiftly passing,
Have held—ah, who shall doubt it?—less shade than glorious sun !

O golden round of wedded lives, what poet can besing thee ?
As perfect as that wedding-ring donned fifty years ago !
Fashioned in strength and beauty by Him whose church once joined them,
Shining more fair than ever in this hour of sunset glow.

O happy lives, that always, in fair or stormy weather,
Have shared the joys and sorrows that crossed their mutual life!
Their years are crowned with honor and the dignity of goodness;
They have had the joy once wished them, this happy man and wife.

A DREAM.

Oh, I think it was in heaven, for it never was on earth,
That we walked such green and radiant fields together,
And the strangely glorious sunlight and the deep and fragrant shade
Must have been a glimpse of heaven's eternal weather.

And I was happy too, I who never now am happy,
For you were what I held you in those first sweet days of love,
So I think it was a prescient sight sent me while I was sleeping,
From the great unsleeping Angel of that gracious land above.

THE STORY OF A SONG.

Thy hand upon my head was laid,
  Thy mouth against my cheek;
The little song I made for thee
  My lips could hardly speak.
It was so sad, that little song,
  So happy thou and I.
We laughed, our joy so mocked the song,
  It ended with "Good-bye."
Good-bye! One kiss for dead love's sake, so best,
For God has parted us as East from West—"Good-bye."

INTENTION.

I MEANT to write a song of battle,
For storied deeds of war inspire;
I seemed to hear the cannon thunder,
I seemed to see the smoke and fire.

But oh, the pathos of the ending
When brave men conquered in the fight,
Knelt, kissing yielded blood-stained colors!—
My eyes are blurred, I cannot write.

IN MEMORY.

A. J. B.

Through sleep to death, through sleep to sweeter sleep,
God led thee home by such a gentle way,
To close thy weary eyes on earth one night
And waken in the glorious heaven's day.

God led thee home by such a peaceful path,
Through sleep to death! He closed thy weary eyes
At night in sleep upon the anguish of our earth,
And bade thee wake at morn in Paradise.

BEYOND THE STARS.

'Tis many a weary night and day
Since we two walked the fields in May.
Hand clasped in hand, my love and I
Looked at the tender evening sky.
"Ah me," she said, "how far away
The heaven seems for which we pray,
Beyond the stars!"

No more, no more, my love and I
Shall gaze up at that evening sky,
For she has gone, while I must stay.
Yet heaven seems not far away,
My breaking heart its grief can bear,
Because I know she waits me there,—
Beyond the stars!

REVULSION.

Sweet memories of the vanished dream
  May solace gentler souls than mine;
The thought of vengeance—that alone
  Can soothe me like an anodyne.

Visions that paint him bearing such
  Deep agony as he gave me
Make sleep a bourne I dread to leave,
  A state of joyous ecstasy.

The hatred that was once a love
  Of all strong passions is the peer;
Like perfect love, it has no end,
  Like perfect love, it has no fear.

ONE WAY TO TELL HIM.

Yes, darling—thou hast a rival,
My secret I now resign—
And I shall rest in his arms some day
As this hour I rest in thine.

I have but a little longer
To stay and be held by thee,
For thy rival is coming, even now
He is mad with jealousy.

And the reason I did not tell thee,
I hoped that he might delay,
For I love thee best, I love thee best,
God knows I am fain to stay!

Nay, curse me not, my darling,
That his kiss shall drain my breath;
I needs must tell thee how soon, alas,
I must go from thy arms to Death!

BEFORE THE BALL.

THERE is a room, a little narrow chamber,
  Dearer by far than these cold halls of state ;
'Tis in a poor, mean street far down the city,
  And once I lived there. Ah, my happy fate !

'Twas always dim-lit by its one small casement,
  More glorified by love than sun or moon ;
But those four walls bounded for us an Eden,
  An Eden that was lost, alas ! too soon.

If I could go there—just once more could stand there—
  And feel the tears within mine eyes again,
I should be strong to live these leaden moments
  And bear with coldness all this grief ingrain.
I should— But hark ! is that the carriage coming ?
  Look ! is the coachman yet in sight ?
How he would stare if I should bid him drive me
  To that poor street I'm yearning for to-night.

THROUGH SHADOW INTO LIGHT.

THROUGH alien faiths built by man's hollow pride
I wandered long, a soul unsatisfied.
Yet worldly goods and worldly joys were mine;
I drugged my doubts with pleasure's Lethean wine,
Down Life's smooth wave I let my tired soul drift,
Yea, I forgot the Giver in the gift.
This in my weal, but ah, what in my woe?
What in the searching griefs that hearts can know?
Ah, what availed me then the false "All's well"
From sects that vainly cry "Emmanuel"
At last, blest day! before the Altar Throne
I learned with joy my Lord and King to own,
And bowed with awe before the Sacred Host.
My gain the greatest where my love was most.
I bless the sorrows that encompassed me,
For, groping through the darkness, I found Thee!"

TO THE CHILD JESUS.

BEFORE COMMUNION.

THOU, holy Child, didst not disdain
To sleep amidst the manger's straw
And, 'mongst the herded cattle there
Thy first few feeble breaths didst draw.
Thus did Thy anguished life begin
In the poor manger of an inn.

That condescension, Lord, I plead,
For I am vile and full of sin;
But Thou wast meek and lowly, Lord,
Oh, make my humble heart Thine inn!
O holy Child, and may I dare
To bid Thee make Thy cradle there?

VIA CRUCIS.

O CHRIST, my Lord, when do I love Thee most?
Is it when friends and kindred gather near,
When I rejoice in the glad warmth and sun
And say unto my soul, "Be of good cheer"?
Not then.

I am too weak; the brilliancy and light
Blinds me to Thee, Thou patient, waiting Lord;
And in the music and the laughter sweet
I lose Thy voice, that speaks the guiding Word.

But when Thy storm-clouds gather round my head
When over me Thy fearful tempests roll,
When friends and kindred all withdraw from me,
And naked and alone trembles my soul—
Ah, then!

Beloved Jesus, then I learn Thy strength,
Through the thick darkness Thy dear face I see.
I bless the desolation and the night,
For when I lose all else, Lord, I find Thee.

HOMESICKNESS.

Oh, where is my dear country
For which I yearn and sigh?
All day I think upon it,
All night my heart makes cry.
Below here are the cedars,
Green fields, and winds that blow;
But this is not my country,
It doth not lie below.

Oh, where is my dear country?
All through the long blue night
I lift my heavy tear-dimmed eyes
Up to the stars' faint light.
I think it lies above those stars
Bright with celestial day,
And I must travel to its peace
By this sharp, thorny way.

Oh, what hath my dear country
For him who suffers here?
A balm for wounds, sweet peace for pain,
A smile for every tear;
God's saints for his companions,
Christ Jesus for his rest,
Who welcomes in the storm-tossed bird
To shelter in His breast.

Oh, who that knows this country
Would shrink beneath his cross?
The thought of heaven makes light its weight
And sweetens earthly loss.
How small life's anguish looks to him
Who reaches that dear strand--
His country, bought for him by Christ,
His home, his fatherland!

DE PROFUNDIS.

I CANNOT understand. I asked no meed
  Of gold ; no greater radiance than a smile
To light my life. And looking in
  I see some childish faults, but no deep guile
That God should choose to smite me with His wrath,
  To make me feel His strong and mighty hand.
What have I done, O God, to suffer thus,
  What have I done? I cannot understand !

I cannot understand, and so meanwhile
  I will be still, and will not question Him,
And will not seek the less to see His face
  Because through tears my eyes are very dim ;
And in the Hand that chose to chasten me
  I will slip trustfully my feeble hand.
For Faith can still cry out in blackest night,
  All's well with me, I need not understand.

IN MEMORY.

BY BISHOP T. U. DUDLEY.

A ROSE of flame, through half a summer's day,
  Did burn and sweetness from her heart distil;
At noon her leaves all burned to ashes lay
  At Love's own feet. He'll guard them safe until
New heavens shall span a new-created earth,
  And Love, once crucified, shall reign on high—
When rose of flame shall spring to virgin birth
  And, unconsumed, her fragrance pour for aye.

A MEMORY: ANNE REEVE ALDRICH.

BY EDITH M. THOMAS.

Since through the Dark thy singing soul took flight
(A wistful cadence lingering after thee),
Receding ever, thy young face I see.
Once seen, once only, on a festal night,

Crowned with a tender wreath of green and white;
But now, alas, alas! its leaves droop witheringly,
Its lilies-of-the-valley gathered be
From the pale meadows far from mortal sight.

So dost thou come, so still the memory haunt,
Like Hero, with drowned eyes and long bright locks,
Tossed up the reedy marge of Hellespont,
Or her who from the steep Leucadian rocks
Sank underneath the water's seamless weft
And but a mellow gleam, a remnant music, left.

TO ANNE REEVE ALDRICH.

BY P. A. C.

1890.

"Ti saluto Rosignuolo."

O THOU whose soul was once a nightingale's,
Singer of songs that break the heart to hear,
Most perfect woman and most perfect seer,
Before whom all our petty praising pales;
Who standest at the very altar-rails
Crowned Poet, with only Sappho for thy peer,
And see'st come rounding up from th' under-sphere
Thine argosies with homeward-bellying sails—
Take at my hand this little leaf of praise,
Lo, where I kneel to lay it at thy feet,
So small, so slight, so mean, it is not meet
That I should dare to twine it with thy bays.
I have no more to give—*my* ships bestride
The far-off dolorous Lethean tide.

TO THE "LITTLE BROTHER" OF A. R. A.

(Her pet name for her canary.)

BY J. E. W.

Across four hundred alien miles
I greet thee, minstrel dear,
Whose song thy sister sweet beguiles
With suasive notes of cheer.

Thy fame hath soared o'er hill and lake,
Thou dainty *rara avis;*
No bird like thee in bush or brake,
Martlet or merle or mavis.

With soulful strains at dawn, the thrush
Salutes the rising sun;
Nor with calm vespers' holy hush
Are his clear measures done.

Nor thrush, nor oriole, nor wren,
Nor all the greenwood choir

Can vie with thee, glad hermit, where
Thou wakenest the lyre.

Hermit? But no: a lady fair
Her "little brother" names thee;
Sweet melodists, a tuneful pair,
By right of song she claims thee.

O happy bird, thy privilege rare
To have the dear protection
Of *minstrel* hands, and tender care
Of maidenly affection!

Oh, let me, bird, have thy sweet place
For one delightful day,
To gaze upon her wondrous face
And all her charms survey;

To feel the magic of her touch,
And warmth of her caress!
But this were blessing overmuch,
Hadst thou the power to bless.

Go, whisper to her all I've said
In these poor metric phrases;
Then sing about her glorious head
A canticle of praises.

TO ANNE REEVE ALDRICH.

BY C. E. W.

"Be gracious, Love, remembering that the mouth
Touched by thine own could scarcely fail to sing."
—*From "Rose of Flame."*

O Love divine, whose quickening kiss
Set two sweet lips to singing!
Warm from those lips, breathe in *mine* ear
Some strain to set *her's* ringing.

She sweetly owns that thou hast taught
Her all she holds worth knowing,
Disclaiming merit of her own,
All, all on thee bestowing.

But if she paid in kisses for
Each song of thy recital—
Though she may offer, canst thou take
Aught farther in requital?

Ah, were it ever mine to help
  Thee keep that heavenly portal,
Th' outwafted sweets from those blest gates
  Would make *my* youth immortal !

TO ANNE REEVE ALDRICH.

BY J. E. W.

When, from its covert sweet, thine image rose,
  Flashed on my startled soul a quivering pang,
And on my fancy crowded broods of woes;
Some sudden view of Nature's beauteous face
Crushes the heart, and for a trembling space
  The senses sicken to a blinding swoon.
But Nature rallies whom she sweetly smites,
  And pours her balm of beauty on her slaves.
So, lady, whom thy wondrous face affrights
  The glory of thine eyes from terror saves,
Their mellow splendor solaces and heals,
And o'er the ravished heart their magic steals.

AN ELEGIAC SONNET.

BY J. E. W.

July, 1892.

From midnight couch I gaze into the night
  Through the scant opening of a window'd space.
  Slowly the moon reveals her luminous face
In full-orbed glory of immaculate light;
She floods my chamber with her radiance bright,
  And lends the gray-blue sky her lustrous grace
  As soft she steals with undistinguished pace
On her sure track and then hath vanished quite!

So on the lonely midnight of my years
  Gleamed the glad splendor of a poet rare,
Filling the ambient gloom with visions fair,
  Lending a sheen of joy to falling tears.
But ah! her light is vanished from my sky,
And I must mourn her passing till I die!

PS
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A7N34

Aldrich, Anne Reeve
Nadine and other poems

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